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ROMANIA'S QUARREL WITH MOSCOW

ANNCR:

SINCE THE WARSAW PACT SUMMIT CONFERENCE LAST MONTH IN MOSCOW, ROMANIA HAS MADE PUBLIC ITS DIFFERENCES WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE REST OF THE ALLIANCE. FROM BUCHAREST, RON PEMSTEIN SENDS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT ON HOW THE QUARREL HAS DEVELOPED.

VOICE:

"AS THE CHINESE SAY," A ROMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL QUOTED, "MAY YOU LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES". THE OFFICIAL SMILED BROADLY AND COMMENTED, "WE ARE NOW LIVING IN INTERESTING TIMES".

IT'S NOT NEW OR UNUSUAL FOR ROMANIA TO DEFY ITS GIANT NEIGHBOR AND ALLY THE SOVIET UNION. MOSCOW WAS ALREADY ANGRY WITH THE VISIT HERE OF THE CHINESE LEADER HUA KUO-FENG IN AUGUST. BUT EVERYTHING BECAME MORE INTERESTING LATE LAST MONTH WHEN PRESIDENT NICOLAE CEAUSESCU REFUSED TO JOIN OTHER LEADERS AT THE WARSAW PACT SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN INCREASING DEFENCE SPENDING. THE ROMANIAN LEADER ALSO REJECTED CALLS FOR A MORE INTEGRATED MILITARY CONTROL OF THE ALLIANCE. ROMANIA WAS THE ONLY WARSAW PACT MEMBER WHICH REFUSED TO SIGN A CONFERENCE DOCUMENT CONDEMNING EGYPT'S MOVES TOWARD A PEACE TREATY WITH ISRAEL. DIPLOMATS SAY HE ALSO REFRAINED FROM SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE SUPPORT FOR VIETNAM AND TO DENOUNCE CHINA.

PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU RETURNED HERE FROM MOSCOW AND MADE A SERIES OF STATEMENTS EXPOSING THESE POLICY DIFFERENCES TO HIS COUNTRY AND THE WORLD. THEN, BY IMPLICATION, SOVIET PRESIDENT BREZHNEV TERMED PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU DEMOGAGIC LAST WEEK WHEN HE

USED THAT LABEL TO DESCRIBE LEADERS WHO PROMOTE UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT. THAT WAS FOLLOWED BY THE VISIT TO BUCHREST THIS WEEKEND OF AMERICAN TREASURY SECRETARY MICHAEL BLUMENTHAL. MISTER BLUMENTHAL STATED AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR ROMANIA'S INDEPENDENT POLICY AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S APPRECIATION FOR WHAT HE CALLED ROMANIA'S CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS.

MISTER BLUMENTHAL WAS NOT THE ONLY VISITOR LENDING MORAL SUPPORT TO PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU OVER THE WEEKEND. ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY SECRETARY GIAN CARLO PAJETTA ALSO CAME HERE BRINGING AN ENDORSEMENT FROM A FOREIGN COMMUNIST PARTY.

THIS TYPE OF SUPPORT, FROM THE WEST AND FROM INDEPENDENT COMMUNIST PARTIES, IS WHAT ONE WESTERN DIPLOMAT CALLED "A FRINGE BENEFIT" OF PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU'S PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO MOSCOW. ANOTHER IS THAT THE ROMANIAN LEADER CAN WIN GENUINE SYMPATHY FROM HIS OWN PEOPLE IN DEFENDING THE NATIONAL INTEREST AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION.

EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS ARE SAYING THAT THE ROMANIAN ECONOMIC SITUATION IS SO DESPERATE THAT PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU IS TRYING TO DIVERT THE COUNTRY'S ATTENTION FROM IT BY DEFYING MOSCOW. BUT OTHER DIPLOMATS COUNTER THAT THERE IS NO NEW INTERNAL SITUATION WHICH WOULD DEMAND A PUBLIC QUARREL NOW. THEY SAY THAT THE ATMOSPHERE AT THE MOSCOW MEETING, AND SOVIET REPORTS OF THE SUMMIT, PROBABLY TRIGGERED THE ROMANIAN RESPONSE.

ONCE AGAIN, AS DURING THE VISIT OF CHAIRMAN HUA, THE ONLY SOVIET REPLY TO THIS ROMANIAN INDEPENDENCE IS EXPECTED TO BE PRESS ATTACKS. NO UNUSUAL MILITARY MOVEMENTS HAVE BEEN NOTED ON EITHER SIDE OF THE ROMANIAN-SOVIET BORDER. EVEN THOUGH ROMANIA HAS BEEN STEADILY BUILDING TRADE TIES WITH THE WEST AND THE THIRD

WORLD OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, ECONOMIC PRESSURE FROM THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES IS ALWAYS A POSSIBILITY. BUT THERE'S NO SIGN OF THAT. ON THE CONTRARY, WITHIN THE LAST WEEK, ROMANIA HAS SIGNED TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH EAST GERMANY, CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND POLAND.

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